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Smoking Cause of Waltham Fire

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Waltham Acting Fire Chief Michael J. Quinn said the cause of the February 18, 2012 fire at 91 Orange Street was the improper disposal of smoking materials. Investigators determined the fire started on the outside of the residence behind the Brasco and Sons Funeral Home.

“As more and more people are smoking outdoors, more smoking fires are originating on the exterior – places like balconies, exterior stairways and enclosed porches. In 2010, half of all smoking fires in homes started on the exterior,” said State Fire Marshal Coan. “It is important to have deep sturdy ashtrays or cans filled with sand for people to dispose of their smoking materials,” he added.

Chief Quinn said, “We are fortunate that no one was injured in this fire and that the smoke alarms were working. Fires that start on the exterior get a head start before the people inside are warned and before the fire department is notified.”

The fire was jointly investigated by members of the Waltham Fire Department, Waltham Police Department and State Police fire investigators assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The [Smoking & Home Fires Campaign](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/campaigns/smoking/) (www.usfa.fema.gov/campaigns/smoking/) by the U.S. Fire Administration works to educate people about how they can *prevent* home fire deaths and injuries caused by smoking materials. The key message is: “If you smoke, Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time.”

Experts recommend these safety tips:

- Cigarettes really need to be completely stubbed out in an ashtray.
- Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away.
- Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trashcan or into mulch.
- Ask your physician for help in quitting.

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